

International Weather and Crop Summary
NOAA/USDA Joint Agricultural Weather Facility

September 17-23, 2006

International (202) 720-9807

HIGHLIGHTS

FSU-WESTERN: Unseasonably warm, dry weather helped summer crop harvesting and winter grain planting.

FSU-NEW LANDS: Drier weather improved conditions for spring grain harvesting in the Urals District in Russia, while early-week showers slowed harvest activities in north-central Kazakhstan.

EUROPE: Dry weather in northern Europe contrasted with unfavorably wet conditions across southern and western growing areas.

AUSTRALIA: Dry weather prevailed across most of the Australian winter grain belt, offering no relief to drought-stressed winter wheat and barley.

SOUTH ASIA: Heavy rain returned to central and northeastern growing areas, while tropical moisture triggered locally heavy showers in western India.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Heavy showers continued in Indochina, while unfavorably dry weather persisted in Indonesia.

EASTERN ASIA: Dry, warmer-than-normal weather dominated most major growing areas of eastern China.

ARGENTINA: Unfavorable warmth and dryness persisted throughout the winter wheat belt.

BRAZIL: Rain overspread major wheat and coffee areas, slowing fieldwork but providing needed moisture.

CANADA: Untimely wetness continued across the Prairies, hampering late spring crop harvesting.

MEXICO: Rain continued across the southern plateau corn belt, but monsoon showers diminished in the northwest.

FSU-WESTERN: In Ukraine and the Southern District in Russia, the second consecutive week of dry weather helped corn, sunflower, and sugar beet harvesting and winter wheat planting. In most areas, topsoil moisture was adequate for crop emergence and early establishment of the winter wheat crop. In Ukraine, reports as of September 22 indicated that sunflower harvesting was 28 percent complete, while the corn harvest was just beginning. Winter crop planting advanced to 51 percent complete. Elsewhere, mostly dry weather prevailed from Belarus eastward across northern Russia (Central and Volga Districts), aiding small grain harvesting and late-season winter grain planting. Weekly temperatures averaged 1 to 3 degrees C above normal in Ukraine, Belarus, and most of Russia, promoting the emergence of newly-planted winter grains.

FSU-NEW LANDS: Spring grain harvesting was well underway in Russia and Kazakhstan. In Russia, drier weather improved conditions for spring grain harvesting in the Urals District. Scattered showers (2-18) fell throughout the Siberia District, causing only temporary interruptions in harvesting. Reports as of September 18 from Russia indicated the harvest of all grains and pulses advanced to 76 percent complete. In Kazakhstan, a narrow band of showers (10-25 mm or more) occurred along a frontal system that progressed through the north-central portion of the country early in the week, slowing harvest activities. Weekly temperatures averaged 1 to 3 degrees C below normal in Kazakhstan and near to slightly below normal in Russia. Frost and sub-freezing temperatures were observed throughout most of the region during the week. In cotton-producing areas of Central Asia, unseasonably cool weather slowed boll maturation, although mostly dry weather helped early harvest activities.

EUROPE: Dry weather in northern Europe contrasted with persistent wetness across southern and western growing areas. For the second consecutive week, a large area of high pressure maintained dry, warm conditions (3-6 degrees C above normal) from Germany and the Low Countries eastward into Poland. The dry weather promoted summer crop harvesting as well as rapeseed and winter grain planting, although early-week showers (10-40 mm) slowed fieldwork in western and southern Germany. Farther west, locally heavy showers (10-60 mm) continued in western France and the Iberian Peninsula, raising crop quality concerns and halting fieldwork. However, the rain provided a much-needed boost to depleted reservoirs levels in Spain, which stood at 39.1 percent of total capacity as of September 19 (compared to 40.4 percent in 2005 and the 10-year average of 51.8 percent.) Likewise, locally heavy showers (25-80 mm) in eastern France slowed fieldwork but boosted moisture supplies for winter grain planting and establishment. Across the south, spotty albeit heavy showers (locally greater than 120 mm) in Italy slowed cotton and corn harvesting, while widespread rain (5-50 mm, locally greater than 100 mm) across the Balkans maintained favorable moisture supplies for winter grain planting and establishment. Elsewhere, light showers (5-15 mm) in England contrasted with heavy rain (20-90 mm) in Ireland, while scattered showers (4-22 mm) returned to the Baltics.

AUSTRALIA: Dry weather prevailed across most of the Australian winter grain belt, offering no relief to drought-stressed winter wheat and barley. Although recent rainfall in some areas had helped stabilize crop prospects, the return to drier weather, coupled with a lack of subsoil moisture, has likely led to deteriorating crop conditions in many areas. The dryness is especially untimely because winter grains are advancing through the reproductive to filling stages of development. Consequently, soaking rains are needed immediately to prevent further reductions in yield potential. Seasonable warmth in Western Australia aided crop development in the few locations where topsoil moisture was adequate. In contrast, unseasonably warm weather (temperatures 3-4 degrees C above normal, maximum temperatures in the upper 20s to lower 30s degrees C) in southern and eastern Australia stressed winter grains and hastened crop development.

SOUTH ASIA: Heavy rain returned to central and northeastern growing areas, while tropical moisture triggered locally heavy showers in western India and southern Pakistan. A stationary area of low pressure triggered widespread heavy rain (100-460 mm) across rice-growing areas of Bangladesh and northeastern India, halting fieldwork, damaging infrastructure, and raising crop quality concerns. Meanwhile, monsoon showers (10-60 mm) returned to northern portions of Pakistan and India, boosting topsoil moisture for winter grain planting. Farther west, Tropical Storm Mukda lingered in the Arabian Sea south of Gujarat, funneling tropical moisture along with moderate to heavy showers (10-90 mm) into cotton and groundnut areas of western India and southeastern Pakistan; the rainfall was detrimental to open-boll cotton in southeastern Pakistan, which had already suffered yield losses due to unusually heavy rain during August. In southern India, heavy rain (40-220 mm) in northern Andhra Pradesh caused flooding, while dry weather in Tamil Nadu and southern Andhra Pradesh increased irrigation demands on vegetative to flowering summer crops.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Widespread rain in northern growing areas contrasted with unfavorably dry weather in the south. Heavy monsoon showers (25-135 mm) across much of Thailand benefited filling to maturing rice while boosting reservoir levels, although dry weather in the northeastern quarter of the country favored early harvesting. Meanwhile, Tropical Depression 17-W triggered locally heavy rain (100-200 mm) and flooding in central Vietnam and northern Cambodia (as detected in satellite imagery) during the latter half of the week. The rain halted harvesting activities but boosted moisture reserves for upcoming 10th-month rice planting. Farther south, scattered, locally heavy showers (5-120 mm) continued in key oil palm areas of Malaysia and Indonesia. In contrast, dry conditions prevailed across much of southern Indonesia, reducing moisture for main-season rice planting and raising concerns over the developing El Niño; El Niño is typically associated with a warmer- and drier-than-normal rainy season in Indonesia. In the Philippines, widespread showers (25-100 mm) provided favorable moisture for second-season rice and corn planting, which typically begins in mid October.

EASTERN ASIA: Dry, warmer-than-normal weather (temperatures averaging 2-4 degrees C above normal) promoted dry down and harvesting of summer crops throughout the North China Plain and Manchuria. Scattered showers (5-25 mm or more) increased topsoil moisture in China's western winter wheat areas (Shaanxi and Sichuan) but rain will be needed throughout major growing areas of the North China Plain before fieldwork can become widespread. Elsewhere, sunny skies aided late-season development of double-crop rice across southeastern China, but locally heavy showers (25-50 mm, locally exceeding 100 mm) hampered harvesting of main season rice in Yunnan and Sichuan. Scattered showers (10-50 mm or more) generated by Typhoon Yagi likely hampered seasonal fieldwork in South Korea and Japan.

ARGENTINA: Mostly dry, warmer-than-normal weather (temperatures averaging 2-3 degrees C above normal) dominated the main winter wheat areas of central Argentina, increasing the potential for moisture stress on vegetative to reproductive winter grains. Highs briefly reached 30 degrees C in Cordoba, where moisture reserves were especially low. Significant rain (greater than 10 mm) fell in southeastern Buenos Aires, but periods of cooler weather (lows falling below freezing in some locations) slowed crop growth and lowered crop moisture requirements. Warmth and dryness dominated the main winter grain and summer crop areas of northern Argentina, although moderate to heavy showers (10-50 mm or more) swept through the northeast (eastern portions of Chaco and Formosa to Misiones) late in the week. According to Argentina's Ministry of Agriculture (SAGPyA), winter wheat was 100 percent planted as of September 21, reflecting a reduction of acreage in the planting intentions of La Pampa (106,000 ha versus last week's estimate of 271,950 ha). In addition, SAGPyA reported that sunflowers were 15 percent planted (compared with 20 percent last year), with the greatest progress reported in the more northerly growing areas.

BRAZIL: Widespread, moderate to heavy showers (25-50 mm or more) covered a broad section of southeastern Brazil (northern Rio Grande do Sul to Bahia's southeastern coast). While slowing harvesting of winter wheat and coffee, the rain was overall beneficial for next season's coffee crop and the moisture will likely initiate flowering in previously dry growing areas of Minas Gerais. The rain was also timely for flowering citrus in Sao Paulo. Similarly, locally heavy showers covered Rondonia and minor coffee areas of western Mato Grosso, but dry weather continued in agricultural areas of southern Mato Grosso, Goias, and Mato Grosso do Sul, likely discouraging early soybean planting. According to private analysts Safras e Mercado, 2006/07 coffee was 96 percent harvested as of September 20, slightly behind last year's pace of 98 percent.

CANADA: Across the Prairies, lingering wetness caused further delays in spring grain and oilseed harvesting. The heaviest precipitation (25-50 mm or more) was recorded in Manitoba and parts of Saskatchewan, with amounts in Alberta generally ranging from 2 to 25 mm. Prior to the rainfall, harvesting was reportedly nearly complete in many Prairie crop districts, helping to minimize the impact of the untimely wetness. Weekly temperatures averaged 2 to 4 degrees C below normal in most crop areas.

In eastern Canada, rain (10-25 mm or more) covered major growing areas of Ontario and Quebec, increasing moisture for winter grains and pastures but hampering seasonal fieldwork. Near- to slightly above-normal temperatures promoted late-season crop development as well as winter wheat germination.

MEXICO: Moderate to heavy rain (25-50 mm or more) maintained favorable late-season moisture for corn and other summer crops across the southern plateau and southeast. In contrast, dry weather dominated much of the northwest, as the North American monsoon weakened and a drier air mass enveloped the region. Hurricane Lane and its remnants brought heavy rain (50-100 mm or more) to southern sections of Sinaloa and Durango early in the week, and eventually contributed to scattered showers (10-25 mm, locally exceeding 50 mm) in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Later in the week, mostly dry weather aided recovery from flash flooding in the areas hardest hit by Lane.